



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, May 27, 2004**  
**Wisconsin Rapids City Council Chambers**  
**9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**LRSC Members Present**

**Wisconsin Counties Association:**

Ed Brown  
Dick Leffler  
Ron Rutkowski (for Chet Zurawik)  
Emmer Shields

**Wisconsin Towns Association:**

Marilyn Bhend  
Arlyn Helm  
Gene Lueck  
Marv Samson

**Regional Planning Commissions/  
Metro Planning Organizations:**

Don Kush  
Laverne Grunwald (for Walt Raith)  
Patrick Pittenger (for Ken Yunker)

**League of Wisconsin Municipalities:**

Bill Beil, Jr.  
Bill Handlos  
Dennis Melvin  
Dave Waffle

**WisDOT Staff Present:**

Sandy Beaupre  
Rod Clark  
Steve Coons  
Doug Dalton  
Michael Erickson  
Mary Forlenza  
Jonquil Johnston  
Casey Newman

**Wisconsin Alliance of Cities:**

Dave Botts  
Rick Jones  
Jeff Mantes (for Jeff Polenske)  
Paula Vandehey

**Others Present:**

Mike Hess  
Tracey Mckenney (FHWA)

**LRSC Members Excused:**

Jerry Mentzel (WisDOT)

## **Opening Business (Don Kush, Mary Forlenza)**

The meeting was called to order shortly after 9 a.m.

## **Review & Approval of March 25<sup>th</sup> minutes**

Minutes from March 25, 2004 were reviewed and accepted as written.

## **Surveying the Council on WisDOT's Connections 2030 (Sandy Beaupre, Casey Newman, WisDOT)**

Sandy Beaupre, Director of WisDOT's Bureau of Planning, presented an update on the statewide long-range transportation plan, *Connections 2030* (handout).

This was the first Council update since WisDOT updated the group over a year ago on the initial direction and planning efforts of *Connections 2030*. Sandy discussed the delays in the plan due to various factors (change in administration, budget constraints, etc), and talked about the present schedule.

The plan will be a multi-modal planning effort, with the intended audience being legislators and policy makers throughout the state. WisDOT is working to incorporate stakeholders' concerns and they will be part of the development process. Planning is working with WisDOT leadership to finalize the definition of this process.

WisDOT has begun surveying transportation users, modeling Wisconsin's current transportation network, and using these tools for future transportation forecasts and trends. The department is considering a corridor concept, recognizing the multitude of activities that are beyond pavement. A corridor approach might be a nice way to portray to the public what a transportation system or network is. Each corridor will identify all modes and how they interact together to make up that particular corridor and its role in the total system. Some major local roads may be within these corridors. WisDOT expects that this approach will help define what our priorities currently are at the state level and into the future.

Bill Handlos asked about the term "connections" – as in the roads are connections to nodes? Sandy confirmed that WisDOT is going to look at the impact of the areas around these nodes, but concentrate on the corridors. However, what have not been talked about are all modes in these corridors outside of the pavement. The department is hoping to talk about these modes, particularly in urban and urbanized areas.

WisDOT is looking to next summer for putting out some alternatives, having a draft version in the fall, and a final plan for the spring of 2006. In the interim, we will continue to collect data; modeling these results and forecasts, and continues WisDOT's efforts to gather information from stakeholders such as the council and the general public. This and other feedback will be used to forge a vision for the Secretary and Governor's Offices of what Wisconsin's transportation system should be in the long term. The department needs to understand what the council's your issues are, not short term, but long-term concerns. Due to budget constraints, we will need to focus more on what works best for the system.

### **Council comments:**

EMS/emergency vehicle concerns in rural areas about removing access on state highways (Hwy 29) to town roads. Can locals maintain the mobility to function properly and safely on the local network, and how will the plan address these future concerns as they develop?

What about farming issues, both sides of a state highway that a farmer may need to get to?

The commitment to a strong local roads component must be followed through.

The council wants to know who are the target audiences for the Plan?

It's clear over the next decade that the priority is business and tourism first, system needs second. If the plan looks too much like an engineering guideline, it probably won't be recognized. It has to demonstrate how the plan leads to tourism and business development – that's what the legislature wants.

The council is very interested in how the Plan will use WISLR data, and wants WisDOT to clearly explain the source and importance of the data (shameless plug).

Members also mentioned that when you talk about a network, you are really going to be looking at a different issue – what is the condition of that system, what condition should it be, and is the funding sufficient for what you want to achieve? So you are looking at it in its totality, not on a project basis. How are you going to develop that type of methodology, of what is the level of service that is appropriate on the local roads system?

We are partners in the transportation system, and the major issue from the local level is – what is the appropriate level of support from the state to help us fund the local portion of the transportation system? Functionally, what do we think is the optimum level of the local system? And having said that, then what is the state local role in getting there?

One of the problems with planning is creating the link between building new capacity, whether it is for an increasing number of vehicles, or safety concerns, and the increasing cost of maintenance. And that goes back to the issue of affordability. The need to maintain what we presently have. And there must be identification in these proposed projects, what it is going to take to maintain them.

In terms of the locals, it often comes back to the counties to maintain. And for state facilities, maintenance costs go up and there isn't money to do it.

There was considerable conversation regarding rail, and the inquiry of if or how the state will analyze the affect of the loss of a portion of the system to the rest of the system (freight hauling in the northern part of the state, for example)? Will a cost/benefit study be done to look into what it would cost to bring back some of these (rail) corridors? It might be cheaper to subsidize them, than to maintain the local corridors.

The council has been working on the issue of overweight trucks for some time. The legislature keeps providing exemption after exception – there is little enforcement on the local system. A suggestion for this plan is to begin looking at the costs (damage) associated with overloaded trucks, and everyone who is benefiting from the exemptions. Roads are not designed for these loads. The plan needs to study and address this from an engineering viewpoint. Blanket enforcement is key.

ITS on freeway systems in urban areas was raised, along with the disconnect that occurs on the state highways as you leave these freeway systems (Racine example).

Sandy will return to the council and report on progress and results from efforts such as the survey. Council members were urged to complete their surveys and provide any comments to Sandy and her staff as soon as possible.

### **SEWRPC'S Long Range Plan Update (Patrick Pittenger – SEWRPC Staff)**

Patrick presented an overview SEWRPC's long-range plan update (handout). The transportation plan is based upon, and is designed to serve, the regional land use plan, both under current review and update. This plan will go out to the year 2035 when it is adopted sometime in early 2006.

SEWRPC is in an inventory and analysis phase looking at previous land use and transportation plans and comparing them to what actually occurred. This helps identify areas of concentration for the public involvement process. This process will be broad based, with emphasis specifically to minority and low-income populations.

To meet travel demand in the future we need to identify the components of the transportation system: transportation systems management, public transportation (transit), bicycle and pedestrian, and highways and arterial streets. It is more than a highway plan – improvements to arterial streets and highways will only occur after we have tried to minimize congestion and safety concerns through improvements of the three other elements.

Given growth rates in traffic, economic and employment variations, and population expansion from the Milwaukee downtown center, using the three elements won't solve the problems of congestion and safety for the transportation network. SEWRPC examined those elements and defined the alternatives and what the public will accept for improvements to arterial streets and highways given that we have examined these other elements first. As learned from the East-West Corridor Study, the public wants alternatives to play a major role in developing the plan before recommendations are brought forward.

Some of the major differences that will be incorporated into the new plan include:

- ✓ **Substantial expansion of transit service** in the region. These improvements are to help meet the travel needs of the transit dependent population, provide additional capacity in major travel corridors and at major travel destinations in the region, and help contribute to the reduction of air pollution and fuel consumption. This includes a combination of rapid transit (higher speeds/limited stops/longer routes) and express transit (higher speeds/limited stops/shorter routes) at nearly 20 times current service levels, local transit, and some form of rail or bus guideways which are currently being

studied through the ongoing *Connector Study* (a combined effort of City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County and Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce.) These elements could all be used in conjunction with current/future park and ride-lots that will be included in the final plan.

- ✓ **Systems Management** recommends continued/expanding efforts to operate/manage existing arterial streets and highways efficiently as possible. The measures currently in use that will be expanded for the regional freeway system include: ramp meters, incident management locations and communications, advanced traffic advisory information using ITS, and a central traffic management operations center. Primary efforts for the arterial streets will be state of the art traffic engineering and traffic operations using coordinated computer-controlled traffic signalization. SEWRPC will also assist in area wide programs to promote carpooling, vanpooling, transit ridership, telecommuting, and work time rescheduling.
- ✓ **Bicycle and pedestrian facilities** will be incorporated into future arterial street plans (reconstructions and new designs), where feasible. The plan will also recommend increases in off-street bicycle/pedestrian paths.

With over 11,000 miles of streets and highways within SEWRPC, and many nearing their useful life and many having questionable life-cycle costs, lots of very important issues will be facing the region in the near future. The real question – do we maintain the current system's capacity level and make the necessary improvements, make system improvements that include widening existing facilities with some additional route miles, or expand the system with the construction of new lanes and facilities increasing capacity.

These alternatives will be evaluated on how they impact these factors:

- Estimated costs – construction and operation for planning period, through 2035.
- Right of way impacts (Current and future)
- Public transit and arterial highway level of service (traffic congestion). Transit as alternative or choice to other modes.
- Air pollution emissions and fuel consumption.
- Environmental Justice/Title VI – extensive analyses will be conducted concerning potential benefits and costs of alternative transportation plans.

Rod Clark raised the issue of financial constraint, and Pat commented that when adopting a regional system plan, you address what these alternatives or options cost, and then you make suggestions about how they could be paid for through various funding mechanisms. It is important to emphasize that many local units of government have cut public transit services in the last few years and put those savings to use providing other transportation related services. One option for providing funding is a Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) for southeastern Wisconsin. This was studied back in 1993 and voted on by the 7 counties that represent the RPC (defeated in a 1 – 6 vote with little support since that time). Milwaukee County has put forth a resolution for SEWRPC (2004) to once again study the RTA and its current feasibility.

SEWRPC is also in the process of developing the first ever Milwaukee County Transportation Development Plan (TDP). These plans have previously been done for Ozaukee County, City of

Racine, City of Kenosha, Waukesha County and others. Consideration of an RTA is linked to that TDP.

## **Traffic Signing & Marking Enhancement Program (Michael Erickson – WisDOT)**

Program manager Michael Erickson provided a program overview (handout). The program was created by Wisconsin State Statute §85.027 in the 2003-2005 biennial budget. The purpose of the program is to provide funds to local units of government for the installation of traffic signing and marking enhancements with the intent of improving visibility for elderly drivers and pedestrians. Approximately \$2.2 million will be available in FY04.

Counties, cities, villages, and towns are eligible. The program is a reimbursement program. The sponsoring unit of government will finance the entire project, and up to 75 percent of the approved project amount is reimbursed upon completion of the project. State routes are not eligible for funding under the program. WisDOT is required to award at least one project to an Urban, Suburban, and Rural area. Also, these awards need to be geographically distributed through out the state of Wisconsin.

This program is specifically earmarked for “brighter and more reflective enhancements than our currently in use” in the following categories: Pavement markings for centerlines, lane lines, edge lines, lane use arrows, and cross walks. Traffic signs are required to be more reflective and with larger letters than are typically used. Other types of signage are included in the program, but are also required to be more reflective and incorporate larger lettering.

The full details and application materials can be found on the Web at:

<http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/local.gov/index.htm>. The application and agreement documentation is patterned after WisDOT’s Local Roads Improvement Program (LRIP), in an effort to make this process as simple and easy as possible for the applicants.

WisDOT has not confirmed funding for 2005 for this program or if it will continue into the future. That answer is tied directly to reauthorization of the surface transportation bill and the state legislature.

## **General Discussion about budget cuts to the Highway Maintenance Fund**

Rod informed the group about the topic of traffic markings and signage given the current budget and lack of funding. Rod spoke to Dave Vieth (Manager of Highway Operations at DOT) and that the budget for traffic marking on the state system was cut in half for this current year. Every area in Operations is short on funding, and a group from the districts has been formed to begin prioritization of limited resources are left to be distributed.

The consensus was that WisDOT would not change its policies concerning how we do business, but in some areas such as traffic markings; we would fall out of compliance with our own standards due to lack of funding. In the short run, this means many edge lines and other traffic markings may not be completed on the previous schedules, but those schedules will still exist.

Bill Handlos felt it was an absolute abomination that we would build new roads and not provide traffic markings to the highway network presently being maintained. Emmer stated that only regulatory signage or needed traffic markings are being replaced or maintained – all other non-critical markings or signage may not be either replaced or maintained in the near term. This

issue has been intensified by the legislature's cuts to the Highway Maintenance fund, and that it is approaching crisis mode – we are very near putting our customers at risk on our local systems because of these cuts.

The council has had this conversation with Randy Romanski, and a motion was made and passed unanimously to send a letter of concern to the Secretary from the LRSC. The Executive Committee will draft the letter, and will share it with the Council.

## **Committee Updates**

### **Education & Communication (Dave Waffle).**

- ✓ **Association schedules.** Continuing get the schedules of the local association meetings identified so the LRSC can get our message out about what our committees are doing with emphasis on the finance committee's work. This is made more difficult by the fact that these associations meet at different times and operate on separate budget cycles. We will be finishing a review of the draft LRSC brochure and have it printed for all the associations, the legislature and other stakeholders.
- ✓ **Biennial Report.** The committee has begun development of the 2002-2004 Report. An outline of what the report should convey has been circulated. We will continue to develop the report, and Chair Don Kush will update the Council on its progress at the September meeting.
- ✓ **GTA Brochure.** Completely rewriting the piece so that it better communicates the key issues regarding General Transportation Aids. Looking to have a draft for Council review by September. This will be a wonderful way to educate the legislature about how GTA is funded and used, and for the Council and local associations to do the same with their members.
- ✓ **LRSC Webpage.** In March the LRSC Web site at WisDOT had nearly 10,000 hits. For the first 6 months of the Web sites operation (May to October 2003) it only averaged about 6,000 a month. When programs are announced and dependent on where we are in a programs cycle, we can see increases in the amount of activity on the Web site from visitors looking for more information concerning these programs. We'll continue to monitor Web site activity.
- ✓ **LRSC Logo on Webpage.** This is done. If you go to the site, you will notice the logo on the main page, and all other pertinent pages. As a reminder, Council agendas and minutes are posted to the site, but only Committee agendas are posted (not meeting notes or other documentation). Those stay internal to both the LRSC and the separate committees.

### **Local Transportation Funding Study Group (Bill Handlos for Rick Jones).**

Rod indicated that any kind of increase in funding for revenue enhancements is off the table for this budget cycle. What will the role be of the LRSC concerning the next budget cycle? Our committee will be meeting prior to the budget process with the Secretary's office to help define the LRSC's role and how we can help provide information to explain the situation of local governments and their transportation networks.



The committee reviewed the 1998 *GTA Report* to understand what had occurred in the past and how that can help with our future planning. Three elements came out of the discussion that followed this review:

- We need to emphasize Best Management Practices (BMP's).
- Adoption of a GTA purpose statement is critical – what does GTA funding do?
- Pavement management tools – WISLR and Paserware 3.0.

WISLR will become a major tool for the BMP's and pavement management tools. Adoption of a GTA purpose statement in statute will help displace the misinformation and perception about how locals inappropriately use transportation funding, and rumors that locals and counties are just wasting GTA funding.

The State of Michigan has created a specific council to address asset management at both the state and local level. Through legislation, Michigan required creation of a system to monitor asset management. This group was given a series of responsibilities to help in this process with the local governments. Many of the things that this council is now doing are very similar to what we are emphasizing with our BMP's and WISLR. Michigan's council is only focused on asset management, while the LRSC has a broader focus; the Michigan example might be a tool for us to use and analyze how some of these approaches work (or not).

**Infrastructure Management Committee (Paula Vandehey).** Major topics are Paserware 3.0 completion, availability of WISLR pavement ratings, and the committee's 2004 goals.

As of Friday May 25<sup>th</sup>: 94% of locals had submitted their pavement ratings. Remaining communities were mostly towns. A list of non-compliers was distributed to the committee with the intent of contacting those units and encouraging them to submit their information as soon as possible. 92% of the submittals are loaded, representing 76% of the road miles. A second WisDOT letter has been sent to communities that have not submitted.

Three problems found with the latest submittals: (1) incorrect naming of streets or having two names for the same segment; (2) improper units of measurement or inconsistent units; and (3) other issues with data entry.

It is anticipated that pilot training and more interactive training courses will help to solve many of these data entry problems. This training will begin in the fall and will also be available on the Web. We also need to work on cross training of individuals so they know how to use WISLR data for other purposes like draft budget creation, and due to the frequent turn over of local officials.

The committee is working on what to do with the pavement rating system once it is developed and available? What are we going to do with it? Who is going to get that data out – will it be the Secretary's office, the locals? This is a timely issue that needs attention now. Additionally, how do we intend to portray the data from the pavement ratings? We need to create a format or guidelines for how this data will be used. Scott Bush is working on some ideas and will be presenting them at a future meeting. Joe Nestler is working on some of the issues concerning

the pavement rating tools from the prior discussion with the council and we will know more about this in the coming weeks.

### **Regulatory, Environment, and Legislative Committee (REAL) (Emmer Shields):**

Environmental regulatory reform is still the key issue of the committee. The biggest issues are: (1) single points of contact with the DNR; (2) simplification of the process; and (3) education, training and outreach for participants. The key proposal suggests providing resources to DNR that would be dedicated to this review process and have the ability to perform all the duties and functions that were once performed by many different individuals. The last major hurdle is how to fund the process. Some draft approaches include:

- Permit Fees structure for individual projects.
- DNR funds it through their budget – because of the reduction in their staff time and resources.
- Taking 1 percent from a transportation-funding source.

The most likely candidate appears to be the transportation funding mechanism. Permit fees have a multitude of issues, both legal and administrative. The DNR is under grave budget constraints. WCA has signed on to the transportation funding approach, now we need to know if the cities, towns and villages will sign on as well.

DNR has issues with how this can occur, but is willing to work with the LRSC to create this system. One of our first steps is the creation of an advisory group between DNR and the LRSC to discuss and address the many issues facing this process, and also a conflict resolution council to help when problems occur. Locals have no current contact with the DNR's central office, and little can be solved at the regional office level. These internal concept/documents are in the draft proposal stages but will be moved forward once the council and the cities, towns and villages provide their input and agreement to this approach.

## **Closing Business**

### **Agenda topics for July 22nd Council Meeting:**

- Draft letter concerning Maintenance Issues to the WisDOT Secretary.
- LRSC brochure complete.
- Meeting with DTIM Administrator to discuss Local Roads and *Connections 2030*.
- GTA brochure development.
- Timelines for development of the themes and legislative budget cycle.

**Meeting Was Adjourned at 1:55 pm.**

